

Romans 16

June 11, 2023

We are going to finish up the Book of Romans today. The Book of Romans has been a great book. No matter how much time we spend in it, we probably haven't spent enough time in it to get everything that God has for us. But we did what we could do with the understanding that God has given us. So today, we are going to look at the last chapter of the Book of Romans and we will close it out today.

By now, you Bible students, those of you who really want to learn the Bible, you should have this book pretty well outlined. I told you Thursday night how that I have been, up to this point, you may have not been noticing it because we haven't been focusing on that directly. But from this point on, now that we are into our Thursday night series on how to divide up the Bible and get your Bible in the right order as far as the notes in it, you are going to be able to understand how the Book of Romans has been outlined for you.

The Book of Romans and its understanding, as far as I am concerned, is absolutely essential in the Christian life. It is one of those books that you simply have to understand it and get it down. There is no way around it. You will never be effective for what you do for God in knowing the Bible and being able to lay out the Bible without a complete understanding of the Book of Romans.

I told you in our first message that the Book of Romans is perceived to be one of the hardest books in the Bible. Part of that is because of the way that Paul wrote it. I told you that it is written like a legal document. If you have ever tried to read the Constitution of the United States or the Declaration of Independence, it is much the same way. In fact, every time there is a ruling by the Supreme Court and they go back to the Constitution, or there is a law that is based on being constitutional, there are a number of universities around this country that host what they call legal scholars, constitutional scholars, and constitutional lawyers. Their whole life is spent trying to interpret what the Founding Fathers meant and what they said when it came to the writing of the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence.

Romans is a lot like that. Romans is basically our Constitution of Christianity. It is certainly the New Testament handbook for Christian doctrine. That is why Paul writes it the way that he does. But the key to understanding it really is the outline that God has put in the book itself. I have told you, and we are going to start looking at those here in the next couple of weeks, that every book in the Bible, the Bible itself, we talked about rightly dividing the word of truth. Every book in the Bible has a natural dividing outline that makes it easy for you to grasp, understand, and retain. God never intended to write a book that man could never get a hold of. He intended to write a book that was not scholarly but a book that was practical. A book that any man or woman could reach in there without anything past a sixth-grade education and get everything that God wanted them to have. That is the Bible that God gave us.

Without that biblical outline or being able to break it down biblically, and then you add to that the style of the writing in its language, and it looks to be hard. But the key of it is just simply getting that natural breakdown. I even think the importance of it is where it is placed in the canon

of Scripture. The word canon of Scripture, you will hear that a lot. That just simply means the books of your Bible. That is called a canon. Not like when you shoot off on Fourth of July, but a canon of Scripture is a collection of books.

I think that the Book of Romans, its placement, is absolutely crucial in understanding how the New Testament lays itself out. You have heard me say it before. Basically, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John all deal with the events that deal with the first coming of Christ. The Book of Acts, which is the next book, basically deals with the transition from the Old Testament to the New Testament and from the nation of Israel to the church. Those books are basically your historical books in the New Testament. But then the next book placed there is Romans. How important is that? By the end of the Book of Acts, the transition has been made from the Old Testament to the New Testament, to the Jew to the Gentile. It has all been completed. So then he puts the Book of Romans, and in the Book of Romans, he now lays out and defines for you and for me everything that the church is now going to believe and it is going to operate from now that we have left the Old Testament system and we have come into the New Testament church age. Everything now changes based on Christ's death on the cross and His resurrection. And so the Book of Romans is placed after the historical books and it brings you up to the point where it begins to define for you and for me what the church is all about.

Then what happens? Then we have Paul begins to write in the order of the books to the churches: 1 Corinthians, 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 Thessalonians, 2 Thessalonians. Then what does he do? Then he writes to New Testament Christians within this church structure that he just laid out in Romans: 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, Titus, and Philemon. You are going to find that, and here is really the key, everything he writes, everything that Paul writes to the churches, everything he writes to the individuals, everything that he tells them to do, what they are to believe, and what they are to now practice is based on a doctrine that he has established in the Book of Romans.

If you can get that thought in your mind and you can hold on to that, that when you look at your New Testament and you just lay out all the books, say you can lay out Matthew to Revelation right on the floor, and you can look at those books laid out, that is what you have to begin to do. You have to see how those books are divided up, and you will see that the Book of Romans, its placement in the order of the books in the Bible, is absolutely crucial to giving you and me the understanding that everything Paul writes past Romans is built on a doctrine that he established in the Book of Romans. It is an incredible. Romans is the foundational book for what you and I believe as New Testament Christians.

Thursday night we started to come through, this Thursday night we are going to start coming through the books of the Bible, and we are going to see how that the Bible itself and then the books of the Bible lay itself out. I showed you, and you already have this, but if you do not, you get one free today. Romans, the breakdown from Romans is absolutely crucial to understand the book. I showed you that Romans is basically divided up, rightly divide the word of truth, in five categories.

➤ 1.) Chapter 1 through Chapter 5: The Historical Section

- 2.) Chapter 6 through Chapter 8: The Doctrinal Section
- 3.) Chapter 9 through Chapter 11: The Prophetic Section
- 4.) Chapter 12 through Chapter 15: The Practical Section
- 5.) Chapter 16: The Conclusion

I. The Seven-Year Plan for Bible Study

When I was a young man starting into the ministry, I told you guys Thursday night that as far as I am concerned, the model for you learning your Bible and a model for you getting to the point in your life where you really have a good handle on the Bible, I think it is back there in 1 Kings 6 and 7. I told you that back in 1 Kings 6 and 7 you have the place where Solomon built the temple. Now we know that the temple in the Old Testament, and you heard me say this many, many times, the temple in the Old Testament was the place that God got the honor and glory out of that in the Old Testament scenario that all the world, and you see it in the Queen of Sheba, you see it in Psalms that talks about all the nations that were coming in and going to that temple and looking at the glory of God.

It is a lot like going to Washington D.C. I know Washington D.C. is about as corrupt as you could get, but I still think Washington D.C. is probably the neatest place to go simply because there is so much history there. There is just so much history there. You walk through there and the Smithsonian Institute is great, and I love the Marine Corps thing there with putting a flag on Iwo Jima, and Jefferson's home, and Lincoln Memorial, the Washington Memorial, all of those things. It is a really neat place to go. Why is it? Because it is where our country began.

But you know when people come to Washington D.C. for the first time, they want to see all those things, but the number one thing that they want to see, which really represents who we really are in our form of government, was the White House. They have tours that you can go through the White House. People just line up and you have to make a reservation. The White House, the Capitol, that is where people are drawn to. Why? Because everything you see around this world when you think about America, you think about that White House.

I think it would have been a terrible thing just from the historical aspect in 9/11 when the terrorists struck. You know that last plane that crashed there in Pennsylvania, it was headed for the White House. That is their target. They took out the Pentagon, they took out the Twin Towers in New York, and the last plane that crashed in that field because some brave American decided to storm the cabin and take it over and put it into the ground instead of where it was going. That was headed for our Capitol. I think it would have been an absolute terrible thing. I mean the whole thing was a terrible thing, but I think it would have been an absolute terrible tragedy to lose the thing that symbolizes in our country what this country is, and that is the White House.

Yet think of that in the sense of what it was in the Old Testament. In the Old Testament they did not have a White House. In the Old Testament the center of all that Israel did was the temple. Just like the center of our country that we think about as the White House for us, for the nation of

Israel, that is where the seat of Israel's power was. Now in our country the White House is not a religious symbol. It is a political symbol. But in the nation of Israel, they are not a democracy, they are a theocracy. And a theocracy is where God is king. And so their politics and their religion was all wound up in one and it was found in the temple. That temple back there represented everything that the glory of God was.

Yet Solomon when he built that, the Bible tells you that he started it and it took him seven years to build that temple. Now I have looked at that and I have thought of that many, many times and I see the pattern there. Personally, in my own mind, I think that is a key to a lot of things. I already, whether you know it or not, we preach and teach out of the King James Bible 1611. The King James Bible went forth to be done in 1603 and it was finished in 1611. It took God seven years to put his Bible out the way that it took seven years to build that temple.

You know what I believe? I believe that you give me any young men and young ladies. I believe you give me anybody who really wants to study the Bible. And I believe that you can get that down to the point that you have what I call a working knowledge of the Bible. If you will give it your attention and give it your time and make it the focus of what you are going to do. If you put the same dedication in it that they did in building the temple back in Solomon's time, I believe that you can have that Bible down in a seven-year period. I really do. In fact, I told them Thursday night in my own life that was the format that I was taught and I even broke it down in the years of what you should try to accomplish in those years. It was a great thing for me.

Along about the third year going into the fourth year of my training, I started to study character studies in the Bible. The first three years was getting the basics, the books down. I got it laid out in my Bible there. But along about the end of the third year into the fourth year, as I had a handle on the Bible, now one of the next things that I began to study was the characters in the Bible, the character studies. Every man and woman in the Bible will show you something about yourself. Every man and woman in the Bible will show you something about what you and I should be.

I will never forget, I knew by that time that God had called me to the pastor. I knew by that time that God was going to use me in ministry. I knew by that time that God had his hand on my life. I began to look at the things and I began to realize that God put the men and the women in the Bible that I could find my way and understand by seeing their attitude of heart, the things that they did, the things that God did with them and taught them and trained them in were the things that I needed to learn. One of the great men that taught me so much about ministry in the Bible was the Apostle Paul. I think in Romans 16, in his conclusion of this letter, it is an incredible look inside the mind and the heart of Paul.

Someday some of you young men will minister your pastor, if not in this church, at some place along the line. It is very obvious to me as we are growing as a church and we are spreading out and ministering places around the state and in Kansas and wherever we go, that it is only a matter of time before the word gets out and other churches start seeking young men to come and pastor those churches, and this will be a watershed that we can put the trained young men up and then send them out as they go. We are not ready for that yet, but it will come in time as God's timing is always the perfect timing. But it is things like this. It is when you see these kind of

concepts in a man's life, these are the things that you want to learn. I think in Chapter 16, this whole chapter, there are four or five really important things to see and we are going to try to cover them today.

II. The Heresy of Women Preachers and Deacons

Now I think the first thing is found in verse one and I think this is very instructive. This is something you are going to bump into very quickly if you have not already, but here is the answer to it. Look at Romans 16:1.

Let us pray first. Father, we do thank you and praise you for the Lord Jesus. We pray you will bless today as we come through it. We love you. We thank you for all that you do and we just love you now in Jesus' name for his sake we ask it. Amen.

Now look at Romans 16:1.

Romans 16:1

I commend unto you Phebe our sister, which is a servant of the church which is at Cenchrea:

Now I think it is important for you to say, "Well, what is important about this verse?" I want you to see something today. I have told you many, many times that heresy is something that creeps into people's lives. It creeps into churches and heresy comes in two forms. Heresy is one form is heresy that what I call is without the church, and that means things that like water baptism for salvation. That is a heresy. You see, water baptism for salvation teaches that you do not get saved by Christ dying on the cross, that your baptism saves you, and of course we know that baptism does not save anybody. That is what you would call a heresy without the church, but there are heresies that creep in within a church.

One of them is the common concept today that you are all going to get into sooner or later, and that is the aspect of women preachers and women deacons, because you are going to find today that wherever you go, you are going to find churches that there are women preachers and there are women deacons. You are confused, you are confronted with it, and you know what? Most of you probably sitting here this morning know that it is not right for a woman to pastor. Maybe you are not too sure about a woman being a deacon, but probably most of you do not know where it starts and do not know where to go in the Bible to deal with it. Well, I am going to show you today where that heresy starts and it starts right in Romans 16:1. Let us talk about it for a moment. You are going to learn something today and this is something you want to get down because it will not be a matter of time before you go to some reunion and Aunt Edna is a pastor of some church, so you want to learn why that is not the way that you want to conduct things.

Now that you have heard me say this before in the Laodicean church, and that is the church that we are in, the last church age before Christ comes back, we see a departure from the Bible. When you lose the Bible, you lose a lot of things. In fact, and I have never taught you this, I am going to stick it into one of my sermons before we get into 2 Corinthians. When you lose your Bible, in other words, when the devil takes your Bible out of your hand and you do not have a Bible anymore, God's Bible. When you lose the Bible, I do not know if you know it or not, you lose

seven things from God. There are seven things that you lose when you lose your Bible, not counting your Bible. When you do not have the word of God, seven things you lose in your life, and this is the reason why there is so much confusion today about women preachers, women deacons, whatever, it is because that people do not understand that when you lose the book, you do not gain some things, you lose some things, and a departure from the truth will always lead to apostasy and this idea of women preachers and deacons and women pastors.

Let me say something to you. First of all, within the New Testament church, there were only two offices within the structure of the church. The New Testament church is laid out in the Book of Ephesians, it is laid out in 1st and 2nd Timothy, it is laid out in the books that Paul wrote. It only has two offices: the office of a pastor, which in the Bible is called a bishop, and the office of a deacon. The only third one would be before the church started, would be the office of an apostle, but there are no apostles today. The apostles died out as the church became into existence, and most people think that there are apostles today, and there are no apostles today. If you are saved this morning, you should be a disciple of Jesus Christ. There are disciples, but there are no apostles. The apostles was an office given early on in the Bible that had a specific function to deal with the nation of Israel. When the transition took place, the apostles died off and there were not any more. But there are two offices in the church: one of them is the office of being a pastor, which I am, and the offices of being a deacon, which some of you are, and those are the only two offices.

Now, first of all, you are going to find that when the first deacons are called in Acts 6, that they are all men. There was not a woman in the mix. Then you are going to find in 1 Timothy 3, Paul lays down to young Timothy the rules for the deacons and the pastors, and you are going to find that they are all male. The Bible says a deacon and a pastor has to be a husband of one wife. Kind of tough if you are a woman. Well, maybe not today, but it was a hundred years ago. But it has to be a husband of one wife.

Let me ask you the obvious: does it not bother you, and maybe you do not even think this way, does it not bother you that the issue of women pastors and women deacons never came on the scene till about little after 1900? Does it bother you that this was not an issue in the 1800s? You do not have, I mean, you have the women who do show up were looked at as crackpots. Ellen White, who started the Seventh-day Adventist group, she is a woman, but she is looked at as a crackpot. There are no legitimate, recognized, bonafide women up till about 1900 or after anywhere in church history. Did that bother anybody? Why is it that it suddenly began to creep up in around 1900 or thereafter, and it steadily progresses till we have almost every Protestant denomination today recognizes not only women pastors but recognizes women deacons? Most of God's people, even if they do not think it is right, they do not know why it is not right. Even the ones who know it is not right probably could not take you to the Bible and show you why. Well, I am going to show you this morning.

Now the reason why, first of all, ladies, and do not take this personal, the reason why 1 Timothy 2:9-15 talks about that a woman can never pastor or she can never be a deacon in the respect of being in authoritative position over men. Now you can be that position if you are married, but not as a pastor or a deacon. I am just kidding. The bottom line is, is because the Bible goes back

to all the biblical foundational stuff. The Bible says that because the woman was deceived first when the devil came down to deceive Adam and he came to Eve, and when he came to Eve, Eve was the one that was deceived. From that point on, the Bible says that from that point on, the woman's desire will be toward her husband. What does that mean? It means that she is going to be under his authority. In the biblical sense, and from that point on, the woman is labeled as a weaker vessel.

Now that is not in a derogatory term. I believe that a woman, she works in the workforce. I think that there are many jobs that she does better than a man. Personally, I do not have a problem with a woman even being president if she is a strong leader. I mean, if some people do not like that, I do not have a problem with that. Why? England was the greatest she ever was under two women queens, Victoria and Elizabeth, and both of them would tell anybody in the papal office where to head in any time that she needed to. So I do not even have a problem with that. So you are not listening to some male chauvinist today. I mean, I think women are very important. If I did not have a mother, I would not even be here today. So I mean, I understand where I am coming from. I am talking about in a biblical sense.

I very obviously, I do not think that I do not think women have a place in combat. I am sorry, I am just sorry. You know, the Israelis tried putting women in combat, and there is something in America never, because we are so screwed up in our country, you know, we put women into combat scenarios. The Israelis tried that and they found out it did not work. You know why it did not work? Because they found out that when a woman got wounded or a woman got hurt, the male guys were three times more likely to get shot or kill themselves because everybody ran over to the woman to try to help her. When it is a man, if a man gets his leg blown off, you call for a medic. When a woman gets her leg blown off, hey, it is a natural thing unless it is your ex-wife. But it is a natural thing. Would you imagine being in the military and being a lieutenant and you have your ex-wife in your thing, you are on point today, I was on point yesterday, and you will be on point tomorrow. How long will you be on point till you are not here to be on a point anymore? I mean, it would not work and they found that it did not work.

Now I think that I mean, I do not, I do not have a problem with any of those things, but I think there are things. I mean, if you are in a combat situation and you know your line gets breached and they are coming over the fence and you are a 109-pound sweetheart little gal and you lose your weapon, all you got is your K-bar on your belt and your guy you got to take on is 210 pounds, it is not going to probably work out for you. I mean, there are just some things that are common sense things, but common sense is not too common anymore in our country. But that is just the way it is. So there are lots of things that a woman does and I think she does better than a man, I really do. I think if she works in the workforce, she ought to get paid. This idea of paying her less because she is a woman is ridiculous. But when it comes to the church and the offices in the church, based on the Bible precepts of the fall coming all the way through, being established all the way back in the Book of Genesis, the Bible never allows women to be in a place of authority because of the fact that she is the weaker vessel. You know, in that state, you have to be careful.

Now how did all this start? How did all this start? You need to learn this today because you are going to be faced with this. This is something that I am faced with all the time. I preached a funeral one time where, you know, I get out of the hearse and when you get out of the go to a funeral, when you go to the graveyard, you know, you walk up and you always lead the casket over to where the graveside is. That is just standard procedure if you do a funeral. I did a funeral one time where the woman, the church that the woman that the family asked me to do the funeral, and the woman there was a pastor. So I walk up to the hearse and this nice sweet little lady comes up and she introduces herself and she informed me that she was the pastor of the church and she was going to walk over to that with me. I said, "That is fine, that is fine." I mean, you are going to be faced in it. Now I did not look at her and say, "Hold up a minute, you know, the Bible said it did not get into that." You just roll with the flow. But there are going to be times when you are going to be faced with some issue that somebody is either going to ask you or you are going to be at work and somebody is going to say, "Well, I like my church because they got a woman pastor." I mean, you are going to be faced with that, so you just need to understand this is part of putting your Bible together, understanding why things are the way they are.

Now how did this all start? Well, first of all, I told you that I guess if you want to put a date on it, you will go back to 1888. Why is 1888 important? Well, in 1888, here is what happens, and some events began to go in succession since 1988. In 1988, officially in this country, the largest Baptist contingency, which was the Southern Baptist Convention in Sarasota, Florida, in 1888, they did away with the King James 1611 Authorized Version. Up to this point, it was the only Bible on the planet outside of the Roman Catholic Douay-Rheims. What they did officially, they made the decree that in 1888 at their convention in Sarasota, Florida, that they were going to dump the King James Bible and accept the RSV of 1888. When that happened, some events began to take place. This country was moving from the greatest period in church history, we have studied it right now on Tuesday nights on church history, into a time of complete apostasy, and it is a time when everything is just upside down.

Along with that, we now have two new groups, three new groups that form out. The first group is what we call, and you will hear this term a lot, it is called Neo-orthodoxy. Now write that down and remember that because you are going to hear that a lot in Christian circles. What is Neo-orthodoxy? Well, the word neo means new. Orthodoxy means something that is standard all the way. When I talk about an Orthodox Jew, I am talking about a Jew that follows the standard Old Testament, never deviates from it. He is orthodox, and of course that is what the word means. But we got a new orthodoxy now. That is what we call in literature is an oxymoron. An oxymoron is something that seems to be the same but it is not. You cannot have a new orthodoxy. Orthodoxy is orthodoxy. If you have a new orthodoxy, that does not make any sense because there can be no such thing as a new orthodoxy because orthodoxy is what has been established. What they are doing is establishing a new orthodoxy.

Now the Neo-orthodox crowd would be, we would consider them the liberal crowd. Their philosophy began like this, and you can see it to this day: their philosophy is change the churches, change the preaching, change whatever you got to change within your church as society changes. See, that is Neo-orthodoxy. In other words, whatever society goes, the church

has to change with that. Hence, if the church, if society accepts homosexuals and lesbians, see where I am going, the church has to accept homosexuals or lesbians. There is a church down my house not too long ago that is up there on Raytown Road, and it is a Neo-orthodoxy church. I cannot remember which one it is, but they had a campaign, I mean obviously to bring people in, and they had signs in their yard and it says, "We are looking for and accept," and it was every pervert you could ever have. The only thing they did not have up there was child molester. They had everything else. Obviously that is Neo-orthodoxy, that the Bible changes, preaching changes as society changes, and of course we get from that the social gospel. That is Neo-orthodoxy. Of course you can see how that our church is not Neo-orthodox. We believe the Bible never changes. We believe what was wrong 2,000 years ago, 1,500 years ago, 500 years ago, 100 years ago, is still wrong today. We do not change. So you are going to have a conflict.

Then you have another, the second group that came in and caused this was a group called Neo-evangelicalism. Oh, you hear that a lot today. Neo-evangelicalism simply means evangelical evangelism. It means new evangelism. Well, you know, I do not think there was anything wrong with the old style evangelism. But here is what Neo-evangelism did, and both of these groups start right around the 1900s, right after they lost the Bible. The Neo-evangelism group, their claim to fame is a reconstruction of theology. That is very important. I do not mean for this to be a history lesson this morning, but if you are going to be effective in dealing with people, you got to know what you are talking about. The thing that I cannot stand among God's people, they have been saved five, ten, fifteen, twenty years, if they have been saved so long, they believe certain things, but if you threw them a Bible in their face, they would have a heart attack before they could prove what they believe because they do not know. That is to me is despicable for a child of God. You ought to know why you believe what you believe. The reason why there is no defense of the gospel today in the workplace, there is no defense of the gospel with the unsaved world because we have no defense. We do not even know why we believe ourselves.

Neo-evangelism was a reconstruction of theology. What does that mean? It means that up to this point, the Bible was in the hands of the common man, hence it produced the greatest period of time in church history, and the Bible was in the hands of the common ordinary man. A reconstruction of theology was meant to take that Bible back from the common man and put it back into the higher realms of the scholastic educational world who are now going to keep the truth for all of us. That is what they did. That is what they did. That is why you find it, you will find in Ephesians, and I could take the next five hours and almost go through the books in our library back there and show you how that that mindset, those two mindsets affected even the Bible believing writers that were going on back in that period of time. But we do not have time for that today, but that is a great study and lesson in itself.

The third group that came along during this time around 1900 was the charismatic movement. The charismatic movement started with a woman, Amy McPherson. The breakdown of what Bible Christianity was in its doctrine. The Neo-evangelicals are all non-denominational. Somebody, oh, I know who it was, it was Jim and Marcy, on Father's Day Jim went back to his old father's church up in Liberty some place, and the pastor got up there and talked about the fact that the reason why that they have such a great love for each other and get along with each other

is because they did away with all the different doctrines that separated everybody. See, now there is the alternative to it. You know why we get along together and they love each other and get along just fine together? Because we have doctrine that separates us from other people. That is what you are supposed to do. I mean, I do not, and I do not know how I get away with it. The Bible says all scripture was given by inspiration of God and is profitable. The first thing it is profitable for is doctrine. But you know how to get away with it? Because they do not believe the Bible anymore, or if they find something in the Bible they do not like, they change it.

50 years later, in the 1950s, after a series of new Bibles had come out, we come out with the Amplified Version. In Romans 16:1, here it comes, a footnote appeared that says that our gal here, little sweetheart Phoebe, was a deaconess. That is the first place you find it, and it is put in a Bible that was recommended by the Neo-evangelicals, the Neo-orthodoxies, who when they developed their Bible, going to get away from a King James Bible as far as they could, and society was falling apart, and now we are going to allow them come in because they are going to put a footnote in there that says Phoebe was the first deaconess. If you have an NIV this morning, in Romans 16:1, you got the same exact footnote. As the next 20 and 30 years rolled on from the 1950s, the devil got rid of the Bible completely and totally by 1990 and 2010, so it is accepted in almost every Protestant denomination and Christian circles today, and they do not even know why.

Now let me show you something. Let me show you something why every day of your life, every day of your life, you got to get on your, you should get on your knees and thank God for the church that God has given you. Now I am not talking about me, I am expendable. I am talking about the church that God has given you. I am just a temporary steward of this church. If Jesus does not come, I will pass on someday and somebody else will pick up the mantle as Elijah did to Elisha and Elisha did for Elisha, and down it will go, and hopefully by the grace of God will keep on going because I have done my job to give you what you need to carry on after I am not here. It is not about me, but I am going to tell you why you ought to get on your knees every day of your life and thank God for the church that he has allowed you to be part of, and most of you do not even see it nor understand it, and I understand all of that.

I am going to do a radical thing next year, at least twice a year. I have wrestled with this and I have come to the conclusion that where we are at, what we are facing, and what is out there, that it is the only way to do it. Next year, two times a year, I have not decided when yet, I am going to take every Christian in this church that has been here for two years or under, and you are going to come to church on Sunday morning. Everybody else two times a year is going to go out and find you another church. You are going to go out and find out what is out there. Maybe you will find a better one, I hope so, if that is what you are looking for. But I am going to end the delusion, the fact that you, we all just take what God is, not me now, this has nothing to do with me, I take it for granted just like everybody else does, but I am going to fix it for once and for all that, and if you do not come back, God bless you, maybe that is exactly what you needed, just needed a little push to get you where you needed to go. But I am going to tell you something, we take for granted what God has given us here, and I am going to show you in a moment how that this church, by what it is based on and by what it is taught and by what you get, you do not ever

have to wonder about why you believe what you believe or what you believe or you do not ever have to be faced with anything you do not understand. I will show it to you. We are going to implement that next year and I think that will be a good thing.

Now watch this. I gave you a little outline a couple of months ago, and some of you use it and got it in your Bibles, but it is a good one. It says, "Be not deceived, be not disarmed, and be not discouraged." All right, be not deceived. Now the standard reason for this teaching of female deacons and pastors and the standard reasoning for this bad doctrine is that the scholars take the Greek word, and it is the Greek word for the word servant in that verse, and they take that Greek word and they translate that Greek word as deaconess. Now it does not matter, there does not matter that there is not a Greek text on this planet, oh that is too small, there is not a Greek text in the universe that has the Greek word for deacon in it. Every one of them has the Greek word for servant. There is not a Greek New Testament on this planet that has the Greek word for deacon, deaconess, deaconer, deaconististor, whatever you may be. Every Greek New Testament has the Greek word for servant. It is the Neo-evangelicals and the Neo-orthodox who wanted to change and reconstruct the theology that interpreted that word, and that is what scholars do. That is why you cannot ever trust Bible scholars. Bible scholars for the most part are as crooked as a dog's hind leg. I think most of them screw their socks on in the morning. You cannot ever trust them, ever. I have been in situations with them for 40 years, and in just a handful that I would ever trust beyond further I could throw them. It is a favorite trick of scholars who want to pass off a demon-infested heresy by doing what they do.

Now you have heard me say it all the time, and this is a classy example, you do not need the Greek to learn the Bible. That heresy starts with Neo-orthodoxy and Neo-evangelicalism, the idea that you need to spend 30 or 40 years of your life studying a language that nobody speaks today so you can have a relationship with God is ludicrous. A guy said one time, "But you believe the King James Bible is the word of God in English," and I said, "That is true." He says, "What, you know how many people do not speak English in this world?" And I says, "You believe the King James the word of God's perfect in the Greek?" He said, "That is right." I said, "You know how many people do not speak Greek today? A lot more than speak English." You do not need the Greek or the Hebrew. It will give you no value whatsoever to the word of God.

1 Thessalonians 2:13

For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe.

It is your believing that that is the book that it effectively works in it in you, and when you do not believe it, it does not work in you. Now I will show you what I am talking about. This is why you ought to get on your knees and thank God for the church you got. You will not, but you ought to.

Now here is what you got. Do you know where that concept of Phoebe being a deaconess first shows up? Do you? Well, it shows up long before 1950. It shows up long before 1900 with evangelicals in the Neo-orthodoxy. It shows up in the teaching all the way back in the first and

the second century. You know who coined the first concept and the first idea that Phoebe was a deaconess? It was two of our old friends back about 100 AD in Alexandria, Egypt. It was Origen and Clement of Alexandria. Remember those, for those of you who have been through church history, remember those two guys? Who were they? They were the guys that took the pure Greek text out of Antioch, took it down in Alexandria, Egypt, and corrupted it in over 65,000 places, and that text became the Roman Catholic Bible to Dark Ages, and they became the Bible a text from every Bible on the market comes from today. That is why that foot reference is in there.

Now see that thing, how many churches would have taught you about Alexandria of Egypt, the corrupt text out of Antioch coming into Alexandria being corrupted? Who would even have taken the time to talk to you about Origen or Clement of Alexandria or Pantaenus? Who would have ever got that level on the Bible? I will tell you why, because you need to know that. I did not teach her because it is me. I teach it because somebody taught it to me, and the Bible says the same things I have committed you commit the faithful men, and you better pass it on to somebody else or you will wind up having a woman preacher or a woman deacon tell you the truth. Some of them, we got probably make better one some of you guys, but it will not happen. That is where it comes from. In other words, the source for that teaching was in the same place that corrupted the New Testament text in over 65,000 places. I do not need to hear one other thing. I do not need to see the Greek word. I do not need to check the manuscript. I know from my Bible because of the two lines that I have taught you and the way the Bible lays itself out, if Origen or Clement or Pantaenus or Philo or any of that crowd had anything to do with it, I am out. I am out because God never had anything to do with that line. That is why you do not find it for 1900 years. You do not find it to this country dump the Bible and the Neo-orthodoxy and the Neo-evangelicals and the Charismatic got together and pulled it all together. Why? If you took the women preachers out of the charismatic movement today, you would not have a charismatic movement. That is the way she works, fellas. Those are things that you need to know in the day and age that we live in. You need to know why. You need to know where it starts, and that is one of the little blockbuster verses in there. Boy, that people read that and Pastor will get up and she will say, "Now Phoebe was our first deaconess," and that is why we have everybody that says, "Oh, that is so." You are out of your mind. You see, you got to get some steel in your backbone at some point about finding out why you believe what you believe. I do not know what to tell you.

III. Paul's Ministry and Relationships

Now here is the next thing we see, and this is where we get into the mind of Paul, and this is some good stuff. Now you needed to have that, but this is this is this is where we live now today, and I am telling you something, guys, and you the young ladies, you can learn a lot from Paul not only by the books he writes but by his attitude and the way that he conducted his ministry and his style of ministry. You know, I know that Paul was not a pastor. Paul was an evangelist, and here is something else you need to know. This is another term that is all messed up today. We think of an evangelist today as somebody that goes from church to church to church to church and holds evangelistic meetings. Well, I do not have a problem with that. If there was a real hellfire damnation evangelist, I would have him. I am not criticizing that nor will I have a problem with that. But in the Bible sense, that is not what an evangelist is. Paul is not a pastor, he is not your

model pastor. The model pastor for you in the Bible is Timothy, and then you can add Philemon and Titus to that to round out the whole scope of it. But Paul is an evangelist, and what an evangelist did in the New Testament times is he went place to place and started churches, and that is what Paul did. All the churches he wrote there, First Corinthians, Second Corinthians, Philemon, you know, or not Philemon, but Thessalonians and Galatians and Ephesians, those are all churches that he started. He would go into town, he would get a job being a tent maker, he would make his tent, get his money together, and then what he would do was is he would he would start a church. He would train up somebody in time to take over that church, then he would move on to someplace else. That is a biblical evangelist. That is what a biblical evangelist is. But you can learn some things from Paul because Paul ministered to people, and the ministry is people. We have been looking at that in Chapter 14 and Chapter 15.

Now let me tell you the first thing that I learned from Paul early on in my life, and I thank God that I had a man in my life that held me accountable and forced me into the right mindset of things. The first thing he taught me, and he did not teach me as much by telling me this as he did by example, but I learned this from studying Paul's life and the great character studies about the third or fourth year that I got into my seven-year plan and through my own pastor's life, and he taught me this: in ministry, never take the people who minister with you, who labor with you, for granted. Your God is going to give you people in the ministry who help you carry the load. They are here when the work needs to be done. They work with, you know, as the church grows, and the older I get, I cannot do everything that I used to do. Hey, there was a time in my life when I ran everything, and I maybe that was not a good thing, but that is what it was. I was young, I had all the energy in the world, I could go 20 hours a day and sleep for four hours and be back at it in the morning. Cannot do that anymore. So what God does, the older you get, the smarter you get, and you start to take the people that are around you and who buy into your ministry that do for you what you did yourself. In other words, they understand your heart, they understand your vision, and you they they they are there with you and they they they grow, they see the ministry growing, they see the people coming in and they are part of it. Like some of you guys on Thursday night when I was teaching that, I saw some of you guys out there and afterwards showing them what you had done in your Bible. That is what I am talking about. You recognize what we are trying to do here. You recognize what I am trying to do here, and you become part of that. When you get people who help carry the load, not just financially, but carry the load ministerially, and you are there and you are working with people and you are helping me, and when somebody comes in and needs something, you are right there. There are a number of you that on Thursday night or Sunday morning, when if I need something with somebody, instead of where I used to have to go deal with it myself, now I can just call a number of you and I know it will get done the way it is supposed to get done. People like that in your life, you never take them for granted what they have done for you. You never get, and I think this is one of the biggest failures that pastors make in ministry, you never take the people who minister with you and labor with you for granted.

I will tell you something else, the second thing: you always take care of those people who put their necks on the line and share the burden of ministry with you. You never forget who they are, that God gave them to you to help accomplish his plan that he gave me to do, and you never,

never, never forget who they are. Remember last Saturday when the men's meeting and the women's meeting, I took you back to the Book of Numbers and I showed you the organizational structure of the ministry, and I showed you that by the order of the tribes setting themselves up around the ark, the three different aspects of ministry in every church. Right in the middle of that circle was the ark of the covenant. That ark of the covenant was the, I have already told you, it was the, there was the essential part of Israel's relationship with God. Everything that God did existed around in and in that ark. Then you had the nation of Israel, the 12 tribes, they camped in a circle. Bullinger, if you have a Bullinger study Bible, he lays it out, even puts the tribes in the right order, and he and around that in a circle there was the, there was the 12 tribes that camped out away from that ark. But inside the middle of that, you had the three families. Remember you had the Kohathite family, you had the Gershonite families, and you had the Merarite families. What was their job? Their job was to take care of the ark. Their job was to take it down, set it up wherever that ark went for 40 years in the wilderness, a picture of the world. Those three families focused on the job that they had to tear it down, get it up. They took care of that concept of God to the place that it got where it was permanent when David took Jerusalem. Then you had the outer people who never really got involved with the three families and what they did. And then there was the third element, was not it, in Numbers 11? Remember the mixed multitude? Hey, and I told you every time God had a problem with the nation of Israel, and without exception, every time that God had a problem with a nation of Israel, it was always with the tribes that had camped as far as they could get away from the central thing that was going on. In all of the years, God never had one issue with the with the Kohathites, with the Gershonites, with the Merarites, not one issue. You know why? Because they were too busy involved in the absolute work of God to get caught up in all that the outer tribe were doing. When God had a problem and he has come down and smited them, it was to the uttermost parts of the camp. It was where the tribes that were part of Israel, they just did not want to get down where it was really the work and the hot stuff was going on.

Boy, in any church you find the same thing. It is the families in this church who are here and carry the load, who do the work that follows with everything that goes on, that in any church that makes the church what God needs it to be. Everybody else is just kind of on the peripheral, they are just kind of out there in la la land someplace. Then he get involved with a mixed multitude, and we saw the mixed multitude, we defined them, did not we? Always complaining when it come to the manna or the supernatural food that God brought down to them. All they could see was this old dry manna. They remembered all the stuff that they had in Egypt, type of the world, the garlic, the leeks, the melons, and then they put the great word in there that we got free. Freely you have forgotten you were a bond slave. Your grandfather, your father, and his father were crushed under the stones to build the pyramids. Freely. You will find, as I told you, in any church ministry, I do not care where you go, anywhere in this world, you will find the church has broken down into those three. You will find the ark of the covenant, the priesthood represents Christ and what he is doing, the three families who saw what was happening and said, "We want to be part of it, we want to be in that, we are going to do that," and they never had time to get caught up in all the crap that goes on because their focus is in the heartbeat of that temple. It is the people who like to maintain their spirituality, who like to carry the big King James Bible, who like to talk

real loud how spiritual they are, that are living in the outer camp as far as they can get away from the action. Then the old mixed multitude works its way in.

I tell you something, there is an order of a chain of command in any ministry. This church belongs to God, no question about it. God called me and gave it to me as his steward, a lot like Paul running around in his ministry talking about the gospel that Jesus Christ had given to him to the Gentiles, calling it my gospel. Paul understood that it was his and he was a steward of it. He was very protective of what God had given him. Then God sends you here to us, to me, to be part of this ministry to help accomplish what God has called us to do. Some do, some do not. Some stay, some have it, some lose it in time, whatever. But we both have to follow the same standard in ministry, and you know as time goes on, you see these things unfold themselves. But Paul never took the people God had given him to get the job done for granted.

You know when you come down through the text here, and this is what is really important, you know that there are three people groups that he addresses here, and it is the same three people groups that we have in our church. Incredible. These are the things you learn from looking into the mind of Paul.

- 1.) Single Women
- 2.) Married Couples
- 3.) Single Men

IV. The Proving Ground of Ministry

Now these people were people that God sent to Paul to get the job done. They believed in God's call to him and became vital to his work that God gave him to do. I say it all the time, many of you will never see this church the way it really is, the way God sees it. You know, out in Texas, they have a place called Aberdeen Proving Ground in Aberdeen, Texas. What that is, is that is a military facility, and every new military piece of hardware, weaponry, projectile, grenade, whatever is developed before it is ever issued to troops in combat, it goes to Aberdeen Proving Ground. They are not one of the greatest museums that you have ever seen in your life with the stuff that they have had come through there. What do they do there? They will take every new piece of military hardware and they will evaluate it. They will stretch it. They will see what it will do, what it will not do. They will rate it, and before it ever gets into, ever gets into the main line frontline soldiers, that piece of hardware is proven beyond any shadow of a doubt that it is reliable. That is all this church is. It is a proving ground. It is not some place that you come in and you just do whatever you want to do. But every time some young man or some young lady says, "I want to be involved in ministry," and I let them, put them in ministry, they are on the hot sheet. I watch them. I get reports on them. You know why? This is the proving ground. It is all that it is.

1 Thessalonians 5:21

Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.

I watch how you handle people over you. If I put you in a ministry and there is some guy over you or a couple of guys over you or a girl over you or a couple of guys over you, and you are supposed to submit yourself because they have been given a job by me, and you go around and badmouth them behind their back, I cannot use you. You are proving something to me. You are proving it. You are, I cannot use you. I am not going to put that element in a situation in ministry. I have learned through 40 years experience or all that new will come back and bite me. It is a proving ground. It is a place where men and women come in and look at this ministry that God has made me steward of. Hey, you are not going to give an account of a judgment seat of Christ. I am. You are not going to pull you over and say, "What did you do at old Pastor? What were your responsibilities as pastor?" That is my job. You will give an account for the youth department being his co-guy in charge, and you will give an account for your end of it. But in the overall text of it, you know what? Or the overall church, it will be me in the hot seat, not you. Some of you do not understand that. Some of you want to have a church but you do not want to have any accountability within the church. I do not know what to tell you. You are in the wrong business. If you work for somebody in this ministry and you are under them, you better be loyal to them and you better back them up, and the first time I catch you shooting your mouth off behind their back to somebody, you are in trouble as far as ministry here is concerned. Mark that down, underline it, get a red pencil back there. This church is the training ground. I want to see what you got. I will give you something to do and watch you what you do. I will watch how you handle it. I will watch how you do it. You shoot your mouth off, you want to be in ministry, and then I put you in, I am going to watch what you do. I am going to watch how you, it is a proving ground. That is the way it has to be.

God sends people here to get a taste of what a New Testament has nothing to do with me. I could die tomorrow, Bubba could take over. I could die tomorrow, Kyle could take over. I could die tomorrow, John could take over. I could die tomorrow, and Danny could take over. I could die tomorrow, Jamie could take over. I mean, it does not make any difference. There are enough guys here that could handle the load. God sends people to get a taste of a New Testament Philadelphia Bible-based ministry, and some say, "That is exactly what I am looking for." Some say, "No, thank you." Fine. I told you a New Testament Bible-based ministry always need to define itself proper.

Proverbs 25:19

Confidence in an unfaithful man in time of trouble is like a broken tooth, and a foot out of joint.

You ever try to eat something with a broken tooth? You ever try to walk with a broken foot or a foot out of joint? It is impossible. A man that has no confidence in the ministry is just the same way in ministry. I will tell you this, guys, and you learn this from Paul because Paul was a guy who always wanted things defined. Paul is a guy who always wanted to know where he was at in relationship to what was going on in ministry. You always want things defined for you. It is very important that you see and understand what you have to do and who you have to do it with.

You know ministry is a lot like building an addition into your home. I know many of you have taken on that task. Many of you have hired people to do it, and they will come in and they will

look at it. It is a lot like what we did when we started down here. Three things you can always count on:

- 1.) The job will always be bigger than you thought it would be.
- 2.) It is always going to take longer than you thought.
- 3.) It is always going to cost more than you anticipated.

That is pretty much, and that is pretty much what the ministry is. But you always got to keep things clearly defined. It is an absolute necessity.

I told you in our Saturday morning meeting, the reason why I like my style of ministry, and not only because it is biblical, but it works. It is designed to find out what you are made of. When the shells start coming in or you get a little bit of glory or you get a little bit of spotlight, it reveals the cracks. My style of ministry will not define people, but rather through a biblical, "prove all things" ministry, it clearly laid out people will be defined. People will define themselves, and that is what real ministry is. This ministry, you being here, is simply this: God has a job that he wants you to do. Before you get to that point to do it, you know what you have to do? Based on the biblical principles, you have to define who you really are. When you go back and look at Timothy being put in the ministry, go back to read it sometimes in Acts 16. You know what it says about Timothy? It says that he defined himself in ministry before he ever got in it. It is just the way that it has to be.

It is like the phrase "Christ-like." You see, when we come through Romans 14 and 15, we now understand what the word Christ-like means. You see, we thought we were Christ-like when we came, did not we? But after you heard what four or five weeks of going through that thing, what God determines is Christ-like, all of us had to look at ourselves and say, "Whoa, I have just been redefined." It is true of all of us. It is why it is so important to always keep the Bible as the single number one thing in your life. We always get to the point where we think better of ourselves than we really are. We always think we are more spiritual than we really are. We always think we are better off than we really are, and we always think we know better than God that we really do. That is what gets us in trouble.

I told you Thursday night when I showed you about putting your blank pages in the Bible and I showed you those little outlines that I use for devotion stuff. I showed you that one in Matthew where it talks about the two problems we all have as Christians. I did not say you owe me, all I put my name in there because that is how I teach it. Two problems I have in my walk with God: one is getting behind God. You do not want to get ahead of God. The hard part is staying even with him. It is staying even with him.

You know what? I do not know if you notice this or not, in almost every last chapter of every book that Paul writes, he reminds and remembers those people who helped him and were faithful in God's call into his life. He does it in the last chapter, 1 Corinthians 16. He does it again in the last chapter of Ephesians. He does it again in Philippians 4. Almost the whole last chapter of the Book of Colossians. He does it in 1 Thessalonians 8 and 9. He lays out 1 Thessalonians eight or nine things he edifies and admonishes of them to keep doing. In 2 Timothy 4, he does it again. He does it again at the end of Titus 3, and finally does it again in Philemon, and then in Romans 16, he does it again. He just never forgot the people who were there with him to carry the load.

The people who are with you in ministry, who are there carrying the burden Sunday morning, Thursday night, in discipleship, in being the leaders and helping teach and train the young ones, the people who from level one to level two to level three who help you carry the burden and the load not only financially but physically in the ministry, you never want to forget them. You never take them for granted, the people that God gives you to do the work he has called you to do.

I am going to close with this. In Philippians 2:25, I think Paul gives one of the greatest tributes to one of his men, one of his young men, and I look at those things in that verse there, and I have never taught these to you, but there are the six things that I look for in somebody to be my co-labor. Oh, I do not expect them the first day you show up. I do not even expect them maybe in the first six months of the first year. But if you are ever going to be part of this ministry of what God has called me to do, and maybe you will not and that is okay, but if you stay the course and you say that this is where God has brought me and this is what I am going to do and we are going to be co-laborers together, then these are the six things that Paul puts in a person's life. There are six things found in that chapter, and these are the things that mark a co-laborer in ministry that Paul looked for, and they are the same things that I look for in ministry. You always let people define themselves because at the end of the day, you always got to know what to look for.

Now there is another side to this, and we are not going to get into it in great length, but he says in verse 17:

Romans 16:17-18

Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them.

For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple.

Now there is the other side of ministry. You see, not only does Paul remember and not forget what people have done for him, he also remembers and does not forget what people have done to him, and not in a revengeful sense, because there is no revenge with a Christian. Not in an unforgiving sense, because a Christian ought to be able to forgive anybody for whatever they do, no matter what the situation may be. That is part of being Christ-like. But it is in a, but it is in a mindset that you know who you can trust and who you cannot. It is in a situation that he says, "You mark those," and that is a strange thing. Could you imagine, could you, I mean, we ought to take that verse out of the Bible. Why? Could you imagine marking people, naming them, having them stand up, or that that caused division? I am not saying it should not be done, but I am saying you cannot get away with it today. That is how far we have come. Far from it. Did Paul really mean what he said or was he just kidding?

You are going to find that just as there were people who Paul never forgot what they did for him, there were people in his ministry that he never forgot what they did to him. You know when you come through that passage in closing here, when you come through that, you realize in 2 Corinthians 10:10, there was a group that says about Paul, "His letters are weighty and powerful, but his bodily presence is weak, and his speech is contemptible." Imagine somebody saying that

about the Apostle Paul. In 2 Corinthians 3, when he is trying to straighten out the church at Corinth, there is a group of people in Corinth who now, remember now, Corinth was a church that Paul started, and he goes back to the church that he started, to his own church, who is having spiritual issues, and they have gotten so puffed up with pride that when Paul comes back, they will not even recognize him as the apostle. So when Paul comes to the door, they said, "Do you have any letters of commendation that state who you are?" I love Paul's answer. He says, "You want a letter of commendation that I am really of God? Go look in the mirror. You would not even be here if it was not for me." But people get that way. They forget. They forget.

Truman Dollar told me at one time that one of the greatest things they ever taught me, and I learned a lot from him. He told me something I never forgot. It is absolutely true in ministry. I do not know how many times I sit in his office and somebody would hose us over or something, and Truman would, and I look at him and I just the young guy and I look at him and I say, "Why did they do that?" And he looked at me and he said, "I can just see him now sitting back in that chair taking his glasses off and saying, 'Bob, learn this: people will never remember what you did for them yesterday, but they are always going to ask you what you can do for them today.'" Boy, that is so true. That is absolutely true. Do not tell me what I did for you yesterday. What can I do for you today? What can you do for me today?

2 Timothy 4:10

For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is departed unto Thessalonica; Crescens to Galatia, Titus unto Dalmatia.

2 Timothy 4:14

Alexander the coppersmith did me much evil: the Lord reward him according to his works:

You are going to find that all down through his life that Paul, when you look inside the man, he was remembering all of the people and were so pressured and precious to him that helped him, the co-laborers, the one that recognized who he was and got on board to help him accomplish what God had accomplished in to do, and he never takes him for granted. But at the same time, and I will tell you guys something, do not ever forget the ones that hose you. Do not get revengeful. Let it go. Forgive them. Go on with life. But remember that there are people out there who are going to hurt you in ministry, and they are going to try to hurt you in ministry. I think when you go back and tally it up, Paul was attacked more by God's people than ever was from the devil's people. But that is just the way that it is.

I tell you two things that I have learned from Paul's life and then I am closing, I am done.

1.) You and for me to endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. Ministry and leadership is not a place for the spineless. It is not for the place for the people who cannot follow a chain of command and be respectful for that chain of command.

2.) Get a reality check. If people loved Paul and people hated Paul, it will be the same with you. If they lied and slandered him behind his back after he left their churches, never do his face, they will do it to you.

Bottom line is this, folks, you have got to realize and understand God has called you to do a job, and that job that he called you to do is going to take the dedication of you making it part of your life. If it is not here, then find some place else you can do it. But that is your job. That is your job.

Let us pray. Father, we thank and praise you for the Lord Jesus. We do.